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SUBJECT: WEEKLY NEPAL MEDIA REPORT FROM JUNE 21 TO 27,
2005

11. POLITICAL AFFAIRS

Subedi released from detention: Ending a weeklong drama, the government released Navaraj Subedi, general secretary of People's Front from detention as per the second order from the Supreme Court on Friday. He had been re-arrested nine days ago and the government had claimed at the court that he was not in their detention. (Major dailies, 6/25)

Relations with China exemplary: Information and Communication Minister and government spokesperson Tanka Dhakal said that Nepal's relation with China is exemplary. He praised China's policy of non-interference and said Nepal wished for similar type of relation with other friendly countries as well. "Nepal wants to develop relations of equality with neighbors," Dhakal said. (Centrist "Kantipur," V/D, 6/26. Cir: 100,000)

Proposal to make king chancellor of all universities: Plans are afoot to issue a new ordinance making the King the chancellor of all universities - private or public. At present, out of the total seven universities, the King is the chancellor of two - Tribhuvan University (TU) and Mahendra Sanskrit University (MSU). According to University Grants Commission (UGC), which is drafting the new ordinance, the move is aimed at freeing the politicization of universities. (Compiled from major dailies, 6/24)

'Parties, Maoists may unite for common goal': CPN-UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, said that Maoists and other political parties could brush aside their differences and share the common objective of the ongoing movement for democracy. "We don't insist that they join our movement, but we can attack the same target in different ways," said Nepal, while addressing a talk program on Thursday. "But they (Maoists) should lay down their arms to exert pressure for constituent assembly elections," he said. (Centrist "Kathmandu Post," E/D, circulation: 20,000, 6/24)

'Monarchy treading on thin ice': Leaders of the agitating seven-party alliance have urged the king to end his active rule if he wishes the monarchy to continue in the country. The leaders said the institution of monarchy itself would be at risk if the King refused to give up his active rule. "The time has come for the King to choose between a republic and a liberal democracy in the country," said Nepali Congress President, Girija Prasad Koirala. "The King should realize that if the republicans and democrats unite, there would be no future for the monarchy." (The Kathmandu Post and other dailies, 6/23)

12. U.S. - NEPAL

Camp arrives: U.S. Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs, Donald A. Camp, arrived in Kathmandu on a two-day visit Sunday. Upon arrival at the Tribhuvan International Airport, Camp told reporters that it was his regular consultative visit. In Kathmandu, Camp will meet cabinet vice-chairmen duo Dr Tulsi Giri and Kirtinidhi Bista, ministers and leaders of political parties. He is the second senior U.S. official, after Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, Christina Rocca, to visit Nepal after the Royal move of February 1. (www.nepalnews.com and other dailies, 6/27)

Moriarty warns of disaster if Maoists win: U.S. ambassador to Nepal, James F. Moriarty, said a victory for the Maoists would be a humanitarian disaster of huge proportions for Nepal. "The next year will be absolutely critical for Nepal," said Moriarty at a public program organized by the East-West Center in Honolulu. According to the report, Moriarty predicted such a scenario would send millions of refugees across into neighboring India. "Should we give \$2 million of security assistance this year, or \$500 million to refugee camps scattered

throughout India in the not-too-distant future?" Moriarty asked. "Within the next 12 to 14 months, Nepal is clearly going to be going down one of two paths. One, the path of reconciliation between the palace and parties to come up with a functioning game plan to get the country back to democracy and also to deal with the insurgency," he said. "The other path is bleaker - no reconciliation, increasingly larger demonstrations in Kathmandu, and Maoists destabilizing the situation with more violence," he added. (Pro-India "Himalayan Times," E/D, 6/25, Cir: above 25,000) Note: All major daily newspapers have published this story, most on their front pages.

Confusing at best: ". But what has the U.S., being the only superpower in the world, done to help bring about a negotiated settlement? As for Moriarty's first condition, the two political forces had been, till three years ago, united against the Maoists; but what happened then? . Many may interpret the third condition as amounting to a plea for more military aid to fight the Maoists. So one wonders how the frequent US statements ruling out the possibility of a military solution and the American tendency to supply more arms are consistent. The US approach is confusing at best." (Editorial in The Himalayan Times, 6/27 in reaction to Ambassador Moriarty's remarks in Hawaii)

U.S.' myopic vision: ". The argument that since the King has taken the step, even if it is wrong, and so must be supported, is at best a very faulty and dangerous one. Was February 1 necessary? . While agreeing with Moriarty that Nepal's security forces do need U.S. military assistance, I cannot agree with his reason for doing so. The bogey of Maoist threat is just bogus. Agreeing to the reason offered by Moriarty means recognizing a threat that does not exist now, and is unlikely in the future as well. And even after the lifting of the emergency, many of the structures put in place in the first three months since February First still remain. The pity is that while UK's Ambassador to Nepal Keith Bloomfield and the European Union 'see' through it, Moriarty and the U.S. don't. Or perhaps pretend otherwise. Moriarty also said that the next 12-14 months would be crucial. True. He and his government will do a great service to the cause of restoration of democracy and rule of law here and the subsequent resolution of the conflict if they stop being myopic." (Opinion in The Kathmandu Post, 6/27, also in reaction to Ambassador Moriarty's remarks in Hawaii)

U.S. to continue aid to fight trafficking: A U.S. official said Friday that U.S. aid to Nepal to fight trafficking would not be reduced though Nepal has moved to Tier One from Tier Two in the Trafficking in Person Report (TIP). The report was released on June 3 in Washington by the US State Department. Presenting details of the report in the capital, official with the TIP Report Section, Mark Taylor, said, "Improving status obviously means it needs less priority but there is no such hard and fast rule in the case of Nepal regarding resources and support." "We are looking for quality response of the government in combating trafficking," he said. (Compiled from The Kathmandu Post and pro-India "Annapurna Post," V/D, circulation: 30,000, 6/25-26)

Correspondence with American Ambassador about Bhotekoshi reimbursement controversy: Bhotekoshi Power Company has written a letter to the U.S. Ambassador saying that Nepal Electricity Authority owes it four million dollars. The BPC has sent a copy of the latest letter that was earlier sent to Vice Chairman and Water Resources Minister Tulsi Giri to the U.S. ambassador too. BPC has claimed that NEA owes it four million dollars, including the interest. A bill on free entry to Nepali garment products in the U.S. markets is currently stuck in the U.S. Senate due to Bhotekoshi controversy. NEA has said that it cannot pay the asked amount. NEA has said that BPC can go to international court if it is unhappy with the present arrangement. The government has formed a committee headed by Mohan Bahadur Basnet, secretary of Water and Energy Commission to resolve the problem. (Kantipur, 6/23)

13. MAOIST INSURGENCY

Dozen security men killed in Arghakhanchi: At least 12 security personnel were killed in clashes with Maoist rebels in Arghakhanchi Saturday. Six policemen and six soldiers were among those killed during the skirmishes. (Media reports, 6/27)

Nepal Maoists deny hand in Bihar attack: The Maoists in Nepal have denied any involvement in Friday's attack in a district in Bihar. Spokesperson of the Maoists, Krishna Bahadur Mahara, in a statement on Saturday, said there was no involvement of Janasena (People's Army) and his party in the attack. "We have no policy of such joint attacks," he said. He said he seriously doubted a conspiracy of "national as well as foreign powers" to defame his party.

Rebels kill 2 villagers, 2 NC (D) cadres: Suspected Maoists killed four people, including two NC (Democratic) cadres, in separate incidents over the past three days. The incident was in stark contrast to Maoist supremo Prachanda's statement not to kill unarmed civilians. (Media reports, 6/22)

Case filed against top Maoist leaders: The government on Tuesday filed cases at an Appellate Court against a dozen Maoist functionaries including Maoist chairman Prachanda and Ram Bahadur Thapa alias Badal. Badal is said to be one of the military strategists of the underground outfit that is waging an armed rebellion for the last nine years. A government attorney made top Maoist leaders defendants in nearly 18-months-old case in which two security personnel were killed in a landmine explosion in Chitwan district. (www.nepalnews.com, 6/22)

14. STATE OF THE MEDIA

Journalists hold nationwide protests: Journalists across the country took out protest rallies against the government's restriction and suppression of independent media on Sunday. Expressing their solidarity with Nepali journalists' movement for complete press freedom in Nepal, journalists in India have decided to take out a rally in Birpur, India, on July 6. (The Kathmandu Post, 6/26)

Blast editor detained, interrogated: Police on Thursday in Dharan detained the editor of Blast Times and its chief reporter Giridhar Sapkota, alleging them of publishing news articles supporting the Maoists. (The Kathmandu Post, 6/25)

Radio journalists issue Kathmandu declaration: The agitating radio journalists issued an eight-point Kathmandu Declaration urging the government to immediately allow broadcasts of news from the FM radios. The first national convention of the independent broadcasters, journalists and supporters issued the declaration. More than 40 participants including radio station managers, representatives and journalists took part in the convention. (Major dailies, 6/25)

Journalists organize sit-in: In protest of government intervention and new advertisement policy, journalists organized sit-in in Kathmandu. Leaders of seven political parties were also present at the sit-in protest. (Major dailies, 6/24)

15. OTHER

Britain summons Nepali envoy: Two days after Nepal summoned British envoy for clarifications, Nepal's traditional friend and ally Britain summoned the Royal Nepalese Ambassador to London, Prabal SJB Rana, to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. British officials expressed dismay at the way Nepal sought clarification from their envoy in Kathmandu. On Monday, British ambassador in Kathmandu, Keith G. Bloomfield, was summoned to Shital Niwas to express 'displeasure' on his recent remarks regarding rule of law and constitutional provisions in the country. British Foreign office told ambassador Rana that Keith Bloomfield's remarks deemed "objectionable" to the Nepali government were well within the broad framework of the British policies vis--vis democratic values in general and the derailment of democracy in Nepal in particular. Rana was told that Bloomfield's remarks need not be mistaken for "interference in the internal affairs of Nepal." On the contrary, the remarks made may be viewed as 'an expression of friendly concern.' (Kantipur and The Himalayan Times, 6/23)

British envoy summoned for his remarks: Ministry for Foreign Affairs Monday summoned British Ambassador Keith Bloomfield for interfering in internal affairs of Nepal while speaking at public functions recently. Foreign Secretary Madhu Raman Acharya sought verbal clarification

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from Bloomfield and asked him to remain within the framework of diplomatic norms and not to make comments on internal affairs of Nepal. The British envoy, in recent days, had made remarks on democracy and rule of law at two separate programs in the Kathmandu valley last week. Ambassador Bloomfield had stressed on restoration of democracy and civil liberties in the country on two occasions recently. "Rule of law, civil liberties and freedom of speech are integral parts of democracy," the ambassador had said, adding that democracy without these is unimaginable. (Major report in dailies, 6/21)

MILLARD